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# ANCIENT EMPIRES:

THEIR

ORIGIN, SUCCESSION, AND RESULTS.

WITH A PRELIMINARY VIEW

OF

THE UNITY AND FIRST MIGRATIONS OF MANKIND.

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"The general design of Scripture, considered as historical, may be said to be, to give us an account of the world, in this one single view, as God's world; by which it appears essentially distinguished from all other books."—*Bishop Butler*.

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LONDON:

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

*Instituted 1799.*

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND 164, PICCADILLY:

SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1813.

~~200. n. 80.~~

221. e. 255.



## PREFACE.

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IN the following work the chief empires of antiquity are contemplated in their rise, succession, and results, down to the Christian era. But, as preliminary to the review of these, it was felt desirable to trace the first streams of human history from an earlier point, and to mark the preparations for wider political combinations, or the early germs of great kingdoms, as indicated in the *only Record* which touches on that remote age—the condensed narrative of the Sacred Scriptures. The claims of the Old Testament Scriptures in this their *historical* character, and as the solitary but certain guide to our inquiries, respecting the first movements and settlements of the human family after the Deluge, appeared also to demand something of distinct notice and exposition. This has been accordingly attempted in a separate chapter, though without any pretension to exhaust a subject which has been less fully considered than its importance deserves. If it should appear that the review of the ancient Scriptures as history affords new circumstances of incidental proof of their Divine origin, the reader will not deem the discussion altogether foreign to the main design of the volume, which is to show how the whole of ancient history has a bearing, more or less direct, on the truth of Scripture, either as narrative, or as prediction. The preceding references will hence account for the introduction of the earlier chapters in this volume, and, it is hoped, may suffice to vindicate such introduction. These first chapters complete the review of ancient history, from its re-commencing point after the Deluge, and conduct naturally to the survey of the greater empires, which occupy the chief part of the work.



As the history of the *Jewish race* is that which more specially exhibits the grand purposes of Divine Providence in the ages preceding Christianity, and as the over-ruling control of Providence in *other* successive monarchies and empires is also particularly marked in the *effect of their interference*, age after age, on the fortunes of the chosen people, it became necessary to give some account of the *selection and destination* of this people, anterior to the review of the world's greater monarchies; and further, in the subsequent notices of the latter, to resume, from time to time, the account of the condition and progress of the small nation in Palestine, which the *first* of the world's empires expatriated from its home, which the *second* restored and guarded in its native valleys, which the *third*, or the Egyptian monarchy derived from it, protected and preserved, to near the very times of Messiah, and which the *fourth* spared and controlled till after the career of Christ was ended, and beyond this, till after the full and wide promulgation of Christianity, when, the special purposes of its continuance in Palestine being completed, its own crimes caused it to be swept from the land, and devoted to a long dispersion. Hence the prominence which was demanded for the fortunes of this one people, even considered as subsidiary to a just account of the purposes accomplished, under the secret direction of Infinite Wisdom, by the greater empires of the ancient world.

The treatment adopted in the review of such empires is not formally, far less minutely historical; yet the attempt in each case is made to present a complete, however general, outline of the rise, progress, and decline of the great empires which became the subject of prophecy, and which not only preceded, but, in their results, manifestly prepared the way for the spread of the Christian dominion, or the fifth empire of the prophetic vision. In the review of each empire, its story is pursued to its close and fall; and such review would not have been complete without this. But the fall and overthrow of a preceding empire necessarily brings before us the chief aggressions and conquests of that

which followed. The fall of Babylon could not be related without reference to the conquests of Cyrus ; and so of the overthrow of the Persian empire by Macedon, and of the Macedonian empire, or its four surviving monarchies, by the conquests of Rome. Yet the story of each of these had to be taken up from its commencement, and hence the completeness demanded for the outline of each empire, necessitated something of repetition in the intermingling references connecting the fall of one great empire with the conquests and agencies of its successor. But this could not be avoided, except by running the whole historic review into the channel of a single narrative of merely general ancient history, which would have been inconsistent with the ulterior purpose of such review, that of making the outline of each empire a basis for reflection and inference, deduced from its own character and fortunes alone, and not from those of any other. For this object, the outline of each required to be distinct and complete in itself ; and, rather than sacrifice this precise and definite picture of each empire, it was deemed expedient to admit of the slight repetitions referred to ; which, however, it is hoped, will scarcely be felt as such, on account of the brief form in which the references are given to any successive empire under the review of its predecessor.

One instance there is of larger recapitulation, for which the reader's indulgence is requested. It relates to the spread of Greek literature in Egypt under the Ptolemies, and to its effect in necessitating the version of the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek, at a date nearly two centuries before the second great Revelation from heaven was given to the world. Such references to the Greek dynasty in Egypt were indispensable to the complete view of the revolutions of the kingdom of the Nile. But the same events necessarily presented themselves also, as results of the conquests of Macedon under Alexander ; and the omission under either head would have rendered the review incomplete. It is for the reader to judge how far the references have been given with such different bearing in each, as may, perhaps, have

guarded against the appearance, or at least the effect of mere iteration.

Some few words seem necessary, further, in explanation of the rapid sketch attempted of the rise of the Greek States, as preparatory to the review of the Macedonian conquests. It seemed to the writer that any just account of these conquests could not be given, without glancing to the formation of those states of Greece south of Mount Ceta, whose struggles with Persia had already weakened that empire and prepared its fall; whose progress and development in political power, in arts, in arms and civilization, created the wide and solid basis of Macedonian power, and the resources for its aggressive conquests; and whose civilization it was, and not that of Macedon itself, which the victories of Alexander diffused over Western Asia and the Nile. Without the preceding rise and power of these states, the formation of the empire of Macedon had been, humanly speaking, impossible; and certainly the chief result of the Macedonian conquests, extending to the Indus, in the diffusion of much of Greek civilization over the east, had been equally impossible. These considerations were, chiefly, the reasons for the place given to such review of the Greek states under that of the third empire of the world. The theme also was alluring; and it seemed a kind of ingratitude and injustice, in attempting the survey of the greater political revolutions of ancient history, to omit the fair though brief representation of that era of Greek development, which affected the civilization of antiquity more deeply and permanently than any other revolution, and whose effect is perpetuated still, in the influence of Greek literature on the speculations and culture of modern Europe.

In conclusion, it is right to mention, that the aim throughout has been, to exhibit the course and results of empires before the Christian era, in a manner adapted for popular reading. The whole, or nearly the whole of ancient history, is considered under the unity of a train of revolutions bearing, however slowly or distantly often, towards the one great result of a preparation for the introduction and spread of

Christianity. This view has required at each stage something of discussion; touching, however, only on the more obvious inferences suggested, while it is blended as freely as possible with historical allusion. On the whole, it is hoped that the work may prove of use to thoughtful readers, and may interest such in further meditation and research on the relation of ancient history to the sacred Scriptures, and to the times of the Christian dispensation.



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